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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 000725

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AF/S FOR B. NEULING
NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR C. COURVILLE
AFR/SA FOR E. LOKEN
COMMERCE FOR BECKY ERKUL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/31/2011

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: MADHUKU ON NCA PLANS, ATMOSPHERICS FOR CIVIL
RESISTANCE

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, a.i., Eric T. Schultz under Section 1
.4 b/d

Summary

[1](#)1. (C) National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) Chairperson Lovemore Madhuku on June 14 told poloff that his organization would organize street demonstrations in the capital within three weeks, with or without collaboration from the opposition MDC and others in civil society. The NCA planned to expand protests to other venues before launching national action in late July. Madhuku conceded that public inclination to act was subdued despite wide support for change, including in rural areas. He also acknowledged that despite growing police sympathy for democratic forces, the intelligence apparatus's were loyal to the regime and still capable. The constitutional lawyer dismissed criticism of his re-election at the NCA's recent Annual General Meeting (AGM) and emphasized the importance of concerted civil action before ZANU-PF consolidated itself behind Mugabe,s chosen successor in the run-up to an election he expected to occur in 2008. End summary.

Street Action in Coming Weeks

[1](#)2. (C) One of civil society's foremost leaders, Madhuku said his organization planned to put people back on the streets within two or three weeks. With the dust settling on the organization's AGM, he expected to get up to 300 individuals demonstrating in Harare initially, with other actions to follow in the following month in Bulawayo, Mutare, Gweru, and

Masvingo. The NCA would also be interspersing smaller actions periodically in Harare's high density suburbs. As in the past, constitutional reform would be the group's principal focus.

13. (C) Madhuku continued that the various protests would lead up to a larger coordinated national action he hoped to launch in late July. The lead-up protests would be unannounced; the national action would be advertised. The NCA was meeting separately on strategy with other democratic forces, such as ZINASU (the student union) and the MDC's anti-senate faction, but the "broad alliance" of NGOs, unions and the MDC had not gotten together formally since April. Madhuku said that the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) had been out of the picture since long before its May Congress and he did not expect them to re-engage in the near term.

14. (C) Madhuku elaborated that MDC anti-senate faction president Tsvangirai and his followers remained rhetorically committed to a late-July resistance effort but he had seen little evidence of any mobilization or preparation on their part. Indeed, after blaming the NCA for dragging its feet on civil resistance in April, the anti-senate faction now appeared reluctant to engage in civil resistance. The NCA would proceed with or without them, Madhuku asserted.

15. (C) Elaborating on the national mood and the setting for civil resistance, Madhuku commented that Zimbabweans were largely supportive of the democratic forces but still not inclined to action out of a mixture of fear and apathy. In rural and urban areas alike, he maintained, people recognized him and were enthusiastically encouraging. Getting more than

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a few hundred into the streets at one time, however, would take more education and confidence-building -- assuming no unanticipated spark otherwise lit a fire under the broader populace.

Tapping Rural Elements

16. (C) Centrally important to the NCA's civil resistance campaign was its growing effort to penetrate and mobilize rural areas, according to Madhuku. Since October, the NCA had conducted at least three workshops in each of the country's 120 constituencies. In the coming three months, they would hold two more in each. Attended by 50 - 300 people, each workshop demonstrated connections between regime misrule and community misery at the local level. The workshops also empowered rural residents politically by offering them promise of support by NCA structures and legal representation should they run into trouble for political participation.

17. (C) Madhuku assessed that the rural population remained a largely untapped resource. Like most urban counterparts, they were suffering and unhappy. Although many were under the sway of ruling party patronage and propaganda, they could in many cases be engaged. He asserted that the best demonstrations conducted by the NCA were those in which rural participants were bussed in because, unlike urban residents, "they had nowhere to run." Madhuku said resource constraints kept them from playing a more regular or expanded role.

Security Forces Ambivalent, Intelligence Apparatus Strong

18. (C) Militating in favor of civil resistance was the increasing ambivalence of the security forces, according to Madhuku. He estimated that the level of outright support for democratic forces within the police was approaching 50 percent. Indeed, he said he and other democratic players

regularly got invaluable tips from sympathetic police. "Free-lance" violence was increasingly rare and few police were overtly hostile absent direct orders from above. The NCA had been around long enough that people recognized it for what it was despite GOZ propaganda and even many in the GOZ were comfortable with it, he explained.

¶9. (C) At the same time, Madhuku said he was impressed by the continuing vitality of the GOZ intelligence apparatus. Despite petrol shortages and other resource constraints, their assets around the country kept the authorities very well-informed. He said that the line of police questioning during each of his more than dozen arrests demonstrated extensive knowledge of all his activities. Further evidence that arrests were intelligence and not law enforcement exercises, he and any NCA member upon arrest always faced extensive grilling about NGO activities and financing -- but never anything about the activity for which each purportedly was arrested.

AGM Flap Won't Impair Effectiveness

¶10. (C) Madhuku asserted that the flap over his election at the NCA's recent Annual General Meeting would not impair his stature with Zimbabwe's democratic forces or effectiveness

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against the regime. The organization's constitutional amendment that permitted him to run again despite existing term limits reflected the overwhelming majority of NCA members. It had been spotlighted disingenuously by the GOZ. The MDC pro-senate faction had for political reasons also criticized him, but most other major players in civil society had overtly endorsed or accepted his re-election without objection. He conceded that several donors had expressed concern about the apparent "anti-democratic" implications of the exercise, but he was working to allay their fears.

Possible Internal ZANU-PF Rapprochement?

¶11. (C) Madhuku predicted that Mugabe would get ZANU-PF's warring Mujuru and Mnangagwa factions to reach some kind of accommodation with a view to stepping down in 2008. Mugabe could not afford to allow one to prevail over the other, which could fracture the party and leave Mugabe essentially unprotected. At the same time, neither faction nor the populace as a whole would tolerate Mugabe staying on after ¶2008. Under the circumstances, Mugabe's interests would be best served by forging party unity with a promise to step down in 2008 and yielding to an anointed successor. He predicted Mnangagwa ultimately would accept Mujuru's succession chiefly because Mugabe would order it, but also because she would prove a weak president and an easier adversary for Mnangagwa than a Vice President Mujuru under the status quo.

¶12. (C) Madhuku warned that a Mujuru candidate supported by a "retiring" Mugabe would be a formidable electoral foe, even assuming the nation's economic crisis continued. People would be so happy to usher the old man out, many would "reward" him by voting for his chosen successor, even without regard to the traditional illicit tools ZANU-PF employed to manipulate elections. Factional tensions would be an issue in the upper echelons but the party's grassroots voters were "homogeneous" and "good at taking orders". Prospects for such a scenario made action by democratic forces all the more urgent now, Madhuku asserted, as the ruling party would begin to close democratic space in the year before the 2008 election.

Comment

¶13. (C) Many in civil society have voiced concerns about the ham-handed inattention to process concerns in Madhuku's re-election as chair of an organization dedicated to constitutionalism. Nonetheless, he remains respected at the grassroots as one of civil society's foremost street organizers and someone who mans the trenches with his troops.

With their respective congresses behind them, the MDC and ZCTU will be under pressure to support NCA demonstrations but may proceed cautiously, sharing Madhuku's assessment of the public's reticence to act as well as the regime's residual if declining ability to react.

SCHULTZ